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CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

PSYOPS AT THE GALWAN VALLEY

Indian troops holding a large Tricolour in Eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley as part of the New Year celebrations. The photo was released by the Army on Tuesday in a tit-for-tat response to a video posted by the Chinese state media on Monday showing PLA soldiers unfurling their national flag on their side of the same region to mark the day | SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

B'luru student sent to custody in Bulli Bai case

18-yr-old girl from Uttarakhand arrested, said to be mastermind in hate campaign

BALA CHAUHAN, SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI & VINEET UPADHYAY
@ Bengaluru/ Mumbai/ Dehradun

THE Mumbai Police on Tuesday arrested an engineering student from Bengaluru and a woman from Uttarakhand for their hate-spewing 'Bulli Bai' app that showed morphed images of hundreds of Muslim women claiming they were up for auction.

While a Mumbai court remanded the student, Vishal Kumar Jha (21) in police custody till January 10, Uttarakhand's Shweta Singh (18), who lives in Rudrapur city of Udham Singh Nagar district, was granted transit remand for being taken to Mumbai. While speculation was rife that Singh was the key accused, there was no clarity on the matter. Jha, a resident of Kumaraswamy Layout in Bengaluru, was summoned for questioning on Monday evening to Mumbai. "He had taken the late evening flight to Mumbai after being summoned. He was questioned by the Cyber Crime Branch and arrested on Tuesday morning," said sources.

The Mumbai police kept the entire operation under wraps. They tracked Jha down through his IP address on Twitter. Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told this newspaper that the city police had no information about the arrest. "The Mumbai Police neither informed us nor did they seek any help," he said.

In Uttarakhand's Rudrapur, Superintendent of Police (City) Mamta Vohra said, "Singh confessed to her involvement in posting pictures and hate messages using at least three accounts." Sources said she came in contact with Jha through social media and developed ideological kinship. Singh cleared her Class XII Boards last year and was preparing for engineering admission.

As for Jha, one of the accounts operated by him was named Khalsa Supremacist, apparently to make it look like a Khalistani mischief. But on December 31, he changed its name to target a particular community, sources said.

The police action came after an FIR was filed under various sections of the IPC and the Information Technology Act.

A BBMP marshal takes photos of a man not wearing a mask, to impose a fine, at KR Market in Bengaluru on Tuesday | SUDHAKAR BR

STRICTER CURBS WEEKEND CURFEW BACK IN KARNATAKA

Night curfew will continue to be from 10 pm to 5 am in the entire state

The guidelines, announced by the Karnataka government on Tuesday, will be effective from 10 pm on January 5 to 5 am on January 19

There will be a weekend curfew from Friday 10 pm to Monday 5 am

The Government Secretariat will run with officials below the rank of Under Secretary at 50 per cent of working strength.

Public transport, including BMRCL, will operate as per the directions of the chief executive of the organisation during the weekend curfew

In Bengaluru Urban district, all schools and colleges, except medical and paramedical, will remain closed from January 6. Classes 10, 11 and 12 will function

All offices will function five days a week from Monday to Friday

P4

3rd wave on, Bengaluru leads spike

RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

IN a massive spike in Covid cases, Bengaluru alone has reported 3,048 positives, of which 147 have been found to be with the Omicron variant of the virus in a single day. Revenue Minister R Ashok and Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said in a late Tuesday night press conference. With this, the Omicron tally in the state went up to 224.

Earlier in the day, Sudhakar officially announced the beginning of the third wave of Covid pandemic in the state with Karnataka witnessing a massive surge in positive cases on Tuesday with a whopping 2,479 patients (cases accounted between 12 am and 11.59 pm of January 3) added to the tally after three consecutive days of 1,000-plus cases.

With Tuesday's surge, as per the health department bulletin, the Covid tally in the state has jumped up from 30,10,847 to 30,13,326 in a day — an increase of 0.08 per cent, while active cases shot up by 19.27 per cent from 11,345 to 13,532.

Of the 2,479 total cases, Bengaluru Urban contributed 2,053, driving the third wave in the state. Sudhakar said Bengaluru has been the epicentre of past two waves and it is repeating in the third wave. "Data shows that cases are doubling every 2-3 days in Karnataka. Positivity rate shot up to 2.59 per cent. If we contain the spread in the city, we can contain it in the state. The state cannot prevent the spread but can reduce the number of cases through proper measures," he said, appealing to the people to follow norms.

The last time the single-day addition of cases crossed 2,000 was on July 29, 2021. "The wave is obviously being caused by Omicron, which has gone loose. We are not able to detect it easily due to our limited facilities. Once we get the S-Gene test next week, we will know the extent of new variants spread more clearly and quickly," a member of the Covid Technical Advisory Committee said. P5

TAKE YOUR SHOT
Jan 3 90,42,837 doses
Jan 4 87,66,164 doses
TOTAL 1,47,52,33,454

NATIONWIDE	JAN 3	JAN 4
Fresh cases	33,750	37,379
Recoveries	10,846	11,007
Deaths	123	126

KARNATAKA	JAN 3	JAN 4
Fresh cases	1,290	2,479
Recoveries	232	288
Deaths	6	4

Nine districts complete 100% first dose cover

BENGALURU: Nine districts in Karnataka have completed 100 per cent first Covid dose coverage among the adult population, Health Minister Dr K Sudhakar said. Meanwhile, the state average is 97 per cent, and all districts have crossed 90 per cent. Dr Sudhakar congratulated health workers and administrations for their hardwork. P5

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Dr K Sudhakar, Health Minister

More firewalls up as new variant spreads

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH the Omicron-driven Covid-19 cases soaring, many states have started intensifying restrictions in a bid to check further spread of the virus. Delhi, which witnessed 5,481 new cases on Tuesday, announced weekend curfew from Friday evening to Monday morning.

"People are requested to step out only when it is absolutely necessary," Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said.

"During the review meeting, the health department was directed to scale up preparedness relating to infrastructure and human resources, in view of possible surge in Covid cases in the coming days," said Lt Governor Anil Baijal, who is also the chairperson of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority which imposed the curfew.

EXPRESS READ

B'luru to get NIA branch, says Home Ministry

BENGALURU: Bengaluru will be among six cities to get a branch of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) after the Finance Ministry approved the proposal from Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The MHA had requisitioned 72 personnel for each branch. However, approval has been given only for 50. P9